

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their 62 stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. It also walks and quacks like a violation of the "equal opportunity" provision of the Communications Act (47 USC §315), because disparaging Senator Kerry is the intended primary focus of the "documentary" being aired.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what serves our democracy.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

Furthermore, I hope this broadcast will prompt litigation urging the federal courts to conclude that §315 should be applied to cable networks because of just this type of abuse of the airwaves. As a concerned citizen, I am thoroughly apalled by the highly partisan quality that has become the norm for "news" and "documentary" broadcasts during election years, and I (and some of the millions of other Americans who pay for basic cable only to guarantee decent quality TV reception) would welcome a legal interpretation compelling ALL broadcasters to comply with the equal opportunity rule.

Thank you for your time and attention.